

11 JAN 1970

Approved For Release 2005/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01314R000100140012-7

NEITHER SIDE BUDGING, MEDIATOR SAYS

By MARTHA ANGLE
Star Staff Writer

BALTIMORE — "And to think I came to Baltimore for peace and stability," said Patrick O'Sullivan, more in sorrow than in anger.

O'Sullivan has found little "peace and stability" during the last week. Along with more than 260 other members of Local 31 of the Web Pressmen's Union, AFL-CIO, he has been on strike.

The affable, sandy-haired pressman had no trouble finding his way around the picket lines, though. "This is my seventh strike in 17 years," O'Sullivan explained.

Strike 9 Days Old

The other six were in New York, where he worked for the ill-fated Herald Tribune and its short-lived successor, the World-Journal-Tribune. O'Sullivan has been at the Baltimore Sun for 2½ years.

The Baltimore pressmen walked out of the Morning Sun, Evening Sun and News American nine days ago after their old contract expired and negotiations for a new one broke down.

Members of other unions refused to cross the pressmen's picket lines, and all three papers were forced to stop publication.

Baltimore, which had no newspapers for 47 days during the 1965 strike of the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, appears headed for another long siege.

Negotiators for the union and the publishers haven't met since Monday, despite efforts by Martin Komornik, a federal mediator, to bring the two sides together.

"Both sides say they're willing to meet but the key to the whole thing is whether they're ready to bargain," Komornik said. "So far, I haven't been able to get a particle of movement out of either side."

Vendors are peddling out-of-town newspapers, mostly from Washington, at 25 to 35 cents apiece on downtown street corners and in suburban shopping centers. But most Baltimoreans miss their hometown publications.

"I miss the television sections most," said Officer J.R. Weichert, a Baltimore policeman. "My brother gets the TV Guide magazine separately, so I have to call him up every night and have him read me the listings," Weichert said.

Television and radio stations have stepped up their news coverage to some degree, but many newspaper readers aren't satisfied.

"To tell you the truth, the news on the radio just isn't as good. You can tell something's missing," said 13-year-old Avalon Jackson, a clerk-typist for a shipping company.

And a Glen Burnie woman, employed as a bank clerk, complained that she now has "nothing to read" over her lunch hour.

Politicians Miss Papers

If the readers are perturbed by the absence of newspapers, so are the news makers. An aide to Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro III said, "The strike is rough on us. There's a lot of stuff we count on that really has to be read in the paper."

Although the publishers, union and federal mediator have all refused to discuss details of the suspended negotiations, it is known that the pressmen originally asked a \$37.15 increase in weekly pay over a two-year contract.

This increase would bring Baltimore pressmen's wages into line with those in Washington. The base pay under the old contract was \$164 a week.

Management reportedly offered the union about \$32 more in a three-year contract.

The Baltimore publishers firmly reject union demands for pay parity with Washington newspaper employees.

Two Cities Contrasted

"The situations of the two cities are totally different," said Donald Patterson, general manager and vice president of the Baltimore Sun.

"Washington is a government-oriented town where wages and other economic conditions are relatively stable. Baltimore is a completely industrial city subject to the fluctuations of the economy," Patterson said.

Patterson blamed the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild, composed of reporters, photographers, editors and clerical employees, for what he termed a "complete about-face" in labor relations in the Baltimore newspaper industry.

Before the Guild struck the Sunpapers in 1965, he said, the unions had always continued negotiating long after their con-

This practice continues in some cases. The contracts of two other unions — the independent mailers and the printers — expired at the same time as the pressmen's pact.

Neither Has Struck

While both of these unions are honoring the pressmen's picket lines, neither has declared a strike. Negotiations are still in progress between the publishers and both unions.

For the moment, the vast majority of the more than 2,500 employees of the Sunpapers and New American are not working, although supervisory and non-union personnel at both plants are crossing picket lines to stay on the job.

For the pressmen, strike benefits amount to \$50 a week. Guild members receive from \$35 to \$65 a week, depending on family size. Printers get \$100 a week.

"We haven't had any real hardship cases yet, but we sure will have if the strike keeps up much longer," a Guild official said.

Some union members, particularly reporters, are grabbing up parttime jobs. Baltimore's educational television station, WMPB-TV, has hired 10 reporters to help its expanded local news coverage during the strike.

Another dozen newsmen have found work at the huge Social Security headquarters on the edge of Baltimore.

But the pressmen are spending their time on the picket lines, walking four-hour shifts in bitter cold weather.

The pressmen were infuriated on Thursday when the Baltimore city health department, acting on complaints from unidentified sources, ordered the strikers to extinguish fires in metal trash cans they were using to keep warm.

Health department officials said the fires violated the city's open burning and air pollution ordinances. Union members charged that the department had been called by the Sunpapers management.

By Friday, the order had been rescinded and the fires were burning once again — but offering only temporary respite from the near-zero cold.

Siege